ABSTRACT

A system for improved detection and decoding of a supplemental bar code label accompanying a primary bar code label is described. A supplemental label is affixed to a product in the vicinity of a primary label. A scanner in a bar code reading system, such as a point of sale system, scans for a primary label. Upon detection of a primary label, the system looks for the bar code encoded on the label in a database containing a set of bar codes with a value associated with each bar code. The value determines how long a search is to be conducted for a supplemental label accompanying the primary label which was scanned. The duration may suitably be based on the probability that a supplemental label will be present. It may also be influenced by the difficulty of detecting a supplemental label which may be present. The database may be preprogrammed, or may be built as scanning proceeds and experience is gained about which primary labels are accompanied by supplemental labels and the time typically required to detect such labels.